

Five Steps to Transform Bad Leadership

Posted by Jennifer Sanderson on Tue, Jun 02, 2015

Do you think you're a horrible boss? Probably not. But your employees might. According to a Monster.com survey, 38 percent of employees ranked their management at the lowest possible level on a scale of 1-5 (17 percent ranked their boss at five). According to another study, employees typically leave their job for one of four reasons:

1. They don't like their boss (31 percent)
2. A lack of empowerment (31 percent)
3. Internal politics (35 percent)
4. Lack of recognition (43 percent)

As far as leadership goes, there may not be much someone can do about the first one. Other than that, the last three all have to do with poor leadership competencies. Management should be responsible for recognizing and empowering employees (which could definitely not hurt being liked). If you think there's a possibility that your management and leadership could use a little work (get it? it's a turnover joke, because your employees keep quitting...), here are five steps you can take to improve leadership competencies.

1. Assess the damage you've already done.

Are you micromanaging like a maniac? How about making your employees work long hours and not giving them the recognition they deserve? Whatever it is, be honest with yourself and figure out what you're doing wrong. 360-degree leadership assessments can provide an honest, insightful answer.

2. Be transparent about your findings.

Honestly admit your shortcomings to your employees (and let's be honest, they probably already know). There's no shame in admitting you were wrong or ineffective. Don't be defensive, just lay it all out. You'll immediately start gaining respect by doing so.

3. Ask for feedback.

If you used a 360-degree feedback assessment, you've already received some good feedback about your leadership competencies. Now is the time to keep receiving feedback as you're trying to improve your management skills. Ask your employees what more you can do to meet their needs and expectations.

4. Make a strategy for change.

Take all the feedback and communication you've received, and turn it into an actionable plan. This is where your leadership competencies can really start to shine; after all, effective leadership reflects the needs of its people. The two key components of this plan should be trust and transparency. Trust is a major leadership competency that goes both ways—employees will trust their leadership if it in turn trusts them. This starts with empowerment and open communication.

5. Never quit improving.

Now that you've set a plan in place, follow through with it. A plan isn't worth anything if you don't keep executing it.

You probably had a boss you disliked in your working life. Think back to what they did, and see if you're doing any of the same things. If so, you should definitely check your leadership competencies. If not, you should still honestly try to assess your leadership competencies, and keep improving your management style.